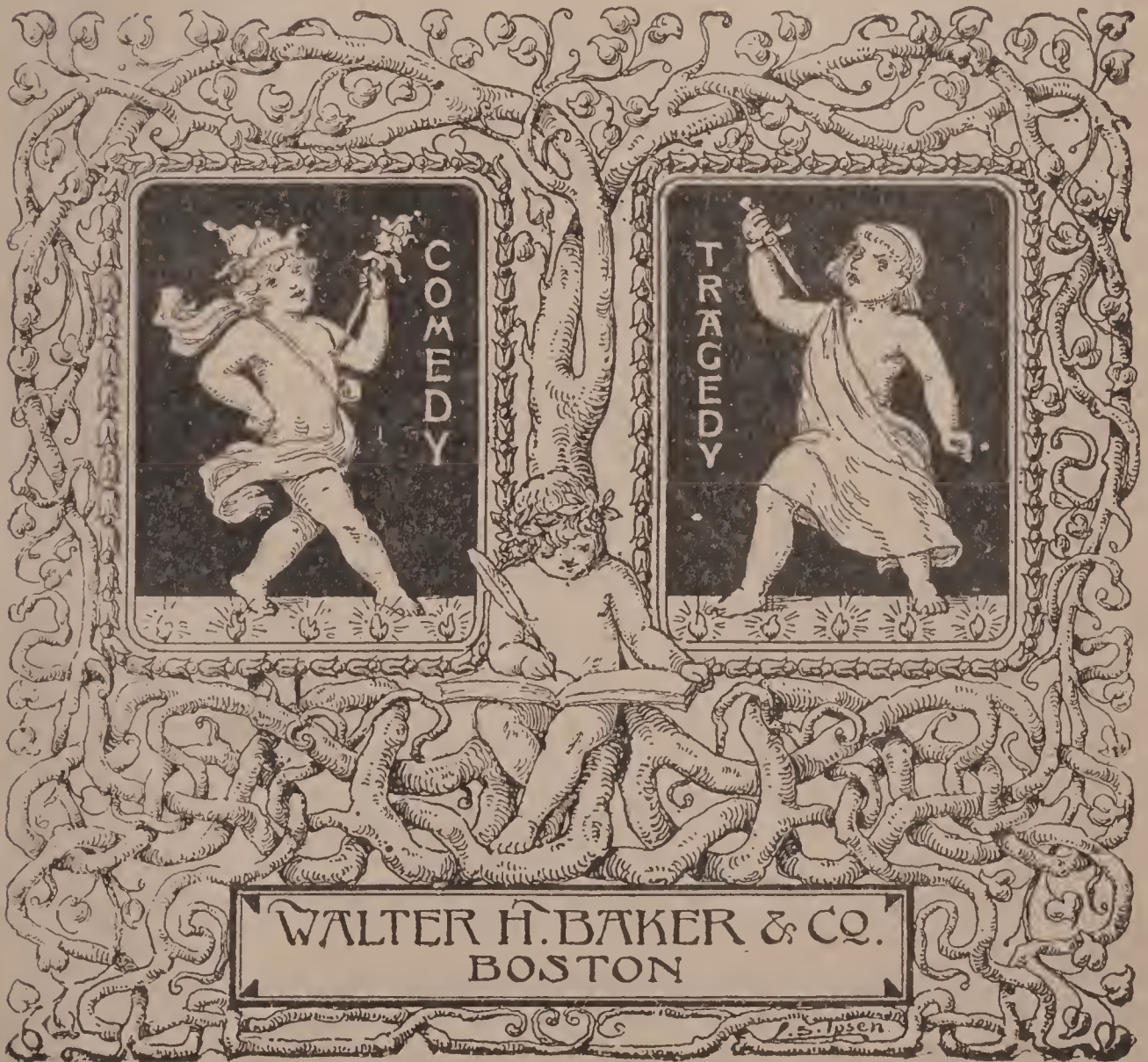


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Coats and Petticoats

A Comedy in One Act

By
RACHEL BAKER GALE

*Author of "Mr. Bob," "The New Crusade,"
"No Men Wanted," "The Chaperon,"
"A King's Daughter," etc.*

BOSTON
WALTER H. BAKER & CO.

1910

Coats and Petticoats

CHARACTERS

LAWRENCE DENBIGH.

MADGE, *his wife.*

JOSEPHINE, *his sister.*

MISS PRUDENCE PRINGLE, *his aunt.*

MISS PRISCILLA PRINGLE, *his aunt.*

PAULINE PEMBERTON.

REBECCA RANDOLF.

NORA.

EIGHT GIRLS *for old maids' song and dance.*

EIGHT GIRLS *for suffragette song and march.*

SCENE.—Living room at the Denbighs'.

In the original production of this play all the parts were played by women, as is perfectly possible in all cases, the author having had this particularly in mind in writing Lawrence's scenes.



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Coats and Petticoats

SCENE.—*An interior. MADGE is discovered, seated by table down R. There is a hat-box containing artificial flowers on table, also a box of red powder and rabbit's foot, a photograph in frame and a hand-mirror. Hat-box on floor with more flowers; some on floor. JOSEPHINE is seated by table down L., back to audience, putting on moustache and looking into hand-mirror. Costumes on table. Chair at right of table. Mantel up R., with mirror. Transparency in corner up R.*

MADGE (*holding up hat which she is trimming and looking at it critically*). How are you getting on, Joe?

JOE. This moustache bothers. (*Rises and crosses to MADGE.*) I can't make it look natural.

MADGE. Is that a moustache? It looks as though an eyebrow had dropped down. (*Laughs.*) You have it on upside down, Joe.

JOE. I thought there was something wrong. It tickles my nose dreadfully.

MADGE (*pulling it off*). If you wear it like that you will tickle the audience. (*Puts it on right.*)

JOE. It's absurd for me to take a man's part, anyway. I know I shall be a failure. (*MADGE laughs at her.*) Oh! don't laugh at a girl when she's down.

MADGE. It's the down on your lip I'm laughing at. (*Tries on hat.*) How do you think this will go for the first act?

JOE. "Go!" It will be fetching. It's lucky we are to have a dress-rehearsal this afternoon, or I'm afraid Polly Pemberton's name would be mud.

(*She is back at table adjusting wig and moustache.*)

MADGE. Her first play. I do hope it will be a success. Put on the rest of your costume and let me see it.

JOE. What do you think would happen to me if Aunt Prue

and Aunt Pris knew I were to appear on the stage dressed as a man?

MADGE. Your Puritan aunts! Too awful to contemplate; but don't worry about that, my dear. You are miles away from them visiting Larry and me. Come, go and make a man of yourself.

JOE. How does a man walk?

MADGE. Oh! like this. (*Walks back and forth as much like a man as possible.*) Does that look like a man?

JOE. More like a duck. I'll show you. (*Takes cane from table and walks with strides, swinging it; crosses to MADGE and leans on her chair with feet crossed.*) I'm sorry for the other sex, but for your sake, dear old girl (*slapping her on back*), I'll be a hero.

(*Goes toward door L. POLLY PEMBERTON runs on, wearing a cape covering a Folly costume. JOE returns.*)

POLLY. I will never write another play as long as I live.

(*Sinks into chair at right of table L.*)

MADGE. What's the matter now, Polly?

POLLY. Margaret Leslie's husband objects to her make-up. (*JOE sits on table L., swinging her feet.*) He wants her to look twenty, and the part calls for forty.

JOE. Keep Jack away until the performance, and then it will be too late.

MADGE. Well—make Margaret twenty.

POLLY. When she has a daughter eighteen!

JOE. Cut out the daughter.

POLLY. Can't. You make love to her.

JOE (*eagerly*). Cut me out.

POLLY. Don't be silly, Joe. Then there's the old maids' drill. Half of the girls are losing their courage. Say that if they are a success as old maids they are afraid they will never be anything else.

MADGE. What nonsense!

POLLY. Harry Withers insists upon using his own lines. Thinks they are better than mine.

JOE (*laughing*). I didn't know he had so much sense.

POLLY (*ignoring her, turns her back*). This is my last attempt to be famous. It is too hard work.

JOE. Cheer up, Polly. Suppose you had my part.

MADGE. Josephine Denbigh! Will you put on your costume?

POLLY. Do! I am just dying to see it. How do you like mine? (*Rises and throws off cape.*)

JOE. Splendid!

MADGE. You are sure of your dance?

POLLY. Every step.

(*Gives a fancy dance to the accompaniment of any appropriate music; girls seated watching her. When finished, POLLY sinks into chair at left of table R. MADGE is seated the other side of it.*)

Enter NORA. She has letter on tray, and wears helmet and carries spear; very military in walk.

MADGE. Where did you get those things, Nora?

NORA. From the costumer's, for the play, ma'am. (*Crosses to MADGE, who takes letter.*) The postman brought it, ma'am. I hope it isn't another costume.

MADGE. It is for Miss Josephine.

(*NORA crosses to L. and gives letter to JOE. She takes it, and while opening it, NORA looks at her very intently.*)

NORA. Excuse me, miss, but there's something on your lip.

(*Pulls off moustache.*)

JOE (*screaming*). Oh! That's my moustache!

NORA. I beg your pardon, miss.

(*Hands it to her on tray and goes up stage.*)

JOE. We want tea, Nora.

NORA. Tay, is it? Shure yees be wanting a shave.

[*Exit.*]

(*MADGE and POLLY have been talking together and arranging flowers.*)

JOE (*who has been reading her letter*). Girls!

POLLY. What is it? A five-hundred-dollar donation?

MADGE. Flowers for the whole cast?

JOE (*rising and crossing to c.*). No joking matter, I can tell you. Aunt Prudence and Aunt Priscilla arrive this afternoon.

MADGE. What!

JOE. They miss me so much I must return with them.

(MADGE has risen and taken letter from JOE.)

POLLY. But you can't. The play!

JOE (*very much excited*). Who cares about your old play? What I am worrying about is, that they will find me dressed as a man. What shall I do?

POLLY. Wire them not to come.

JOE. Too late. They are on the way. Madge, why don't you suggest something?

MADGE. I am thinking just as fast as I can.

JOE (*to POLLY*). You are in this. Think! Everybody think.

(*All three walk up stage and back, JOE holding on to her head in c.*)

MADGE (*on JOE'S left*). I have it! Larry has gone to New York. Aunties have not seen him for years. *You* can be Larry.

JOE (*all down stage c.*). What! I—Larry!—Think again.

(*Repeat business.*)

POLLY (*all down stage again*). Splendid practice for you.

MADGE. With that wig and moustache they will never know you.

JOE. But ———

MADGE. No time for buts; we must act quickly.

POLLY (*slapping her on back*). Brace up and be a man.

MADGE. It will be such a good joke on Larry.

JOE. Joke! How about me?

(*They push her off L.*)

MADGE. Help me with these boxes, Polly. Aunties may arrive any minute.

(*Both busy picking up flowers and feathers.*)

NORA (*entering with tea-wagon and wheeling it down R.*). The costumes are a-beginning to arrive, ma'am. Where be they a-goin'? In the guest-room?

MADGE. Mercy, no! In Mr. Denbigh's smoking-room.

NORA. Yis, ma'am.

(*Stands watching POLLY, who is arranging hair and gown before mirror.*)

MADGE (*serving tea*). Cream and sugar, Polly?

POLLY. Yes.

NORA (*taking cup of tea from MADGE*). Tay, Miss Polly.

(*POLLY turns and takes it, sitting down at left of table R. NORA exits imitating POLLY'S arrangement of hair and gown.*)

JOE (*entering dressed in man's costume, but wearing high-heeled shoes. Crosses to tea-table and stands behind MADGE and assumes heavy voice*). Two lumps.

(*MADGE startled.*)

POLLY. I should never know you, Joe.

JOE. How about aunties?

MADGE. They will never dream that it is you.

JOE. How about the real me?

(*Takes a cup of tea, crosses to R. and sits at right of table.*)

MADGE. Never thought of that.

POLLY. You must disappear.

JOE. Oh, I will disappear all right. Trust me for that. I can't drink tea with this moustache on. (*Takes it off and puts it on table. Indicates tea-wagon.*) Isn't that something new?

MADGE. Yes; a tea-wagon.

JOE. Oh, I see! Serving tea "a la carte"!

POLLY (*groaning*). Spare us, Joe.

NORA (*entering c.*). You're wanting at the tiliphone, Miss Polly.

POLLY. More trouble.

(*Dances off c. NORA watches her.*)

MADGE. See that the guest-room is in order, Nora. Mr. Denbigh's aunts are arriving this afternoon.

NORA. Shall yees moind if I lave the ould maids' wigs on the bed, ma'am? It is just full of them.

MADGE. Don't you leave one there.

NORA. No, ma'am. [*Exit c., imitating POLLY'S dancing.*]

JOE (*crossing to L.*). What will you do with aunties during the rehearsal?

MADGE. Some one must take them automobiling.

JOE. Perhaps they won't want to go.

MADGE. They must.

POLLY (*running on and throwing play book on floor*). Might just as well give up the play.

JOE. What's the trouble now?

POLLY. Dick Raleigh has just come from town, and has forgotten the moon for the last act.

JOE. Have an eclipse. I shall look better that way.

[*Exit, L.*

NORA (*entering*). Are yees through with the tay-wagon, ma'am?

MADGE. Yes, Nora. (NORA *wheels it off C., singing,—* "I'm on the water-wagon now." *Cheers heard outside.* MADGE *runs to window.*) It is Becky Randolph in her suffragette costume. The crowd is cheering her.

JOE (*running on from L.*). Girls! Where did I leave that moustache?

POLLY (*picking it up from table and giving it to her*). You need a gold chain for that.

JOE (*putting it on*). It is like a will-o'-the-wisp. One moment it is with me, and then it is gone.

MADGE. Be sure it is with you when aunties arrive.

JOE. Aunties! [*Exit, L.*

(*Enter NORA, C., with tea-wagon piled high with wigs; is crossing to L.*)

MADGE. What have you there, Nora?

NORA. The wigs, ma'am.

MADGE. On my tea-wagon!

NORA. They be so slippery, ma'am, I was afraid I might be afther a-droppin' one. (*Starts for door.*)

MADGE (*picking up boxes*). Take these, Nora. (POLLY *also brings some, and they put them on wagon; they keep falling off as NORA puts them on.*) Nora, Miss Josephine's aunts are arriving unexpectedly this afternoon. They would be very much shocked if they knew she were to appear in our play dressed as a man. Miss Josephine will pretend to be Mr. Denbigh.

NORA (*holding up both hands*). The saints presarve us!

POLLY. It is only for fun.

NORA. And do yees think yees can make a man of Miss Josephine?

MADGE. She has a splendid wig and moustache.

NORA (*scornfully*). And do yees call that a man! Oh! It's only throuble yees be afther a-makin' for yourselves. Whinivir we have a mix-up loike that in the ould counthry it's "Wigs on the Grane" we be afther a-callin' it. Oh, Musha! Musha!
[*Exit, shaking head.*]

MADGE (*to POLLY; they stand looking at one another*). Not very encouraging.

POLLY. Not so very.

(*Cheers outside; both run to window up stage R.*)

REBECCA RANDOLF (*outside*). Ladies and women! (*Cheers.*) The future presidents of the United States! (*Cheers.*) Now is the time to strike for freedom! (*Cheers.*) Down with the men! (*Hisses and groans; vegetables are thrown through the window; REB. runs on C., with hat crushed down on head and coat collar turned up. She wears navy blue bloomers, white tailored shirt-waist, stiff collar and yellow tie, soft hat with brim, black stockings and high-heeled shoes.*) Am I all here? Madge, there is something down my neck.

MADGE (*removing lemon*). Some one handed you a lemon.

NORA (*coming down with cabbage*). Here's something you forgot, ma'am.
[*Exit.*]

REB. (*giving it to POLLY*). That was intended for the author. Does this costume suit you, Polly?

POLLY. Couldn't be better.

REB. Dad said that if I appeared behind the footlights in bloomers he would never forgive me.

POLLY. But you shouldn't wear high-heeled shoes.

REB. Well, I just couldn't make a guy of my feet. Oh! you should have seen the crowd following my carriage. The enthusiasm stirred me from my shoes up. They called for a speech and I gave them mine on your front door-step, Madge. (*Strikes attitude.*) Ladies—women—future presidents of the United States! Now is the appointed time. It is the hour to strike for freedom! to be man's equal! aye, his superior. At the ballot—at the polls—North or South—it does not matter which—at home—abroad—and from the Alleghanies on the East—to the Rockies on the West—we will plant our flag—emblem of the achievement of women!—Oh! it was grand.

MADGE. Good! You ought to bring down the house with that.

REB. Hope it won't bring any more lemons.

JOE (*entering from L.*). I am ready for the sacrifice.

REB. That's a great costume, Joe. How do you like mine?

(*Twirls around.*)

JOE. Wonderful bloomers.

REB. The latest suffragette cut.

MADGE. Joe, you must wear men's shoes.

JOE. Can't! They are too clumsy.

POLLY. You must. I'll get them.

(*Runs off L. JOE sinks into chair and MADGE and REB. remove shoes.*)

MADGE. Those shoes would give the whole thing away.

(*POLLY runs on with tan shoes; they should be much too large.*)

POLLY. I could only find these.

(*Business of putting them on.*)

MADGE (*after one has been put on*). There! that is better.

JOE (*trying it*). I feel like a pint in a quart.

(*Crosses to table R., and crowds tissue paper into toe, REB. helping her.*)

NORA (*entering c.*). Two ladies have arrived, ma'am.

MADGE. Did they give you their names?

NORA. They said they were Miss Prudence and Priscilla.

JOE. Aunties! Then please excuse me!

[*Exit, hopping on one foot; has shoe in hand.*]

MADGE. Quick, Nora, the costumes!

(*Helps her gather up costumes and they both run off L., NORA having put crown on her head; during this conversation REB. is standing before mirror up R., arranging her hat, and has not heard. Turns and finds the room vacant.*)

REB. Well! I call that sudden. It will be a grand time to practice my speech. (*Takes play book from pocket and*

mounts chair at left of table R.) Ladies and women! It is your duty to demand the right to vote!—to rebel against the selfishness of man — (MISS PRUDENCE PRINGLE and MISS PRISCILLA PRINGLE *appear at door C. They wear old-fashioned silk gowns, small shawls, hair dressed in gray side curls, and wear bonnets and mitts.*) Put aside your frills—take off your pompadours and lay aside your petticoats. (*Old ladies come down stage.*) I repeat—lay aside your petticoats.

MISS PRU. } (*together, holding up hands in horror.*) What!
MISS PRIS. }

(*REB. is studying her part and does not see them.*)

MISS PRU. Priscilla! This is no place for us.

REB. (*continuing*). Now is the appointed time. It is your duty to demand the right to vote — (*Old ladies, interested, draw nearer to REB. and listen.*) Let the men be not only the bread-winners but the bread makers — Once more I say—strike for freedom.

MISS PRU. Priscilla, we are in the wrong house.

MISS PRIS. It may be an asylum.

REB. Once more, I say, strike for freedom! (*Turns and sees the old ladies, who are looking at her bloomers.*) Why, hallo, girls! (*Jumps from chair.*) You came in costume, too. Oh! you are in the old maids' drill.

OLD LADIES. Old maids' drill!

REB. Splendid make-up. Those side curls do not look a bit false. (*Pulls one of MISS PRU.'s curls.*)

OLD LADIES. False!

REB. (*taking box of red powder and rabbit's foot from table*). But you need a little more color. (*Touches up MISS PRU.'s cheeks; she is very much astonished. To MISS PRIS.*) You are just right. Do you know, I believe we shall *all* wear bloomers yet.

MISS PRU. Bloomers!

MISS PRIS. Never!

REB. (*to MADGE, who enters from L., and is horrified to see REB. with the old ladies*). Haven't these girls a fine make-up, Madge? (*Crosses to MADGE.*)

MADGE. Girls! They are Josephine's aunts!

REB. Aunts! (*MADGE nods assent.*) Not in the play? The real thing? Then please excuse me.

(*Exit c., laughing. The old ladies watch her off and look very indignant.*)

MADGE (*embracing the old ladies*). Dear Aunt Pris—dear Aunt Prue. I am so glad to see you.

MISS PRU. Who was that person?

MADGE. Oh! Miss Randolph. One of my neighbors.

MISS PRU. A neighbor! A most improper person.

MISS PRIS. Most improper.

MISS PRU. She wore bloomers.

MISS PRIS. Yes, bloomers, and told us to remove our petticoats.

MADGE. Oh! Oh!—oh!—that—that—is the latest costume to wear while taking the fresh air cure. She walks several miles a day, and the bloomers make it so much easier.

(*Goes up stage and rings bell for NORA. POLLY appears from L., waltzes up to door C., and disappears, MADGE pushing her off.*)

OLD LADIES. What was that?

MADGE. Oh!—Oh!—another neighbor. She is taking æsthetic dancing to preserve her youthful figure.

MISS PRIS. Is she taking the fresh air cure too?

MISS PRU. She's likely to get enough fresh air in that costume. Where is Josephine?

MADGE. So sorry, but she has gone for a long automobile ride. Won't return until late this evening.

MISS PRIS. We are very lonely without her. She must return with us.

MADGE. Oh, don't take her away from us yet. She only came a week ago.

MISS PRU. I am so tired traveling. I will sit down. (*Attempts to sit but MADGE prevents her; same business with MISS PRIS.*) Oh, you mustn't sit down. (*To MISS PRIS.*) I don't want you to sit down. (*Enter NORA.*) Nora, show the ladies to their room.

NORA. Yis, ma'am.

MADGE. If you will follow Nora she will show you to your room. You must be very tired. (*Eagerly.*) Don't hurry. Take a nice long nap.

MISS PRU. We never take naps.

MISS PRIS. Never. [*Exeunt, followed by NORA, off R.*]

MADGE (*sinking into chair by table L.*). What shall I do with them? It will be Nora's "Wigs on the Green," all right.

REB. (*entering c.*). There is one transparency missing, Madge. Have you seen it?

MADGE. Yes, in the corner. (*REB. takes transparency from corner up R., and comes down with it. It should have "Votes for Women," or "Down with the Men," printed on it in large letters.*) Well! you made a nice mess of it.

REB. Why didn't you tell me you were expecting old ladies? I really thought they were here for the rehearsal. (*Laughs.*) It was such a good joke.

MADGE. Joke! I am so provoked with you, Becky Randolph, I feel like turning you and your suffragettes out of the house.

REB. What! And lose the one opportunity of my life to make a speech in bloomers! Never!

(*Exits c., exclaiming: "Ladies!—Women!" etc. MADGE throws book at her. Scream from old ladies outside. They enter, MISS PRU. holding up red wig.*)

MISS PRU. We have had such a fright. We saw this on the floor and thought that there was a man under our bed.

MADGE. Oh—oh! (*Confused.*) That is Larry's hair.

MISS PRU. Larry's hair!

MADGE. Yes—haven't you heard? He was scalped.

OLD LADIES. Scalped!

MADGE. Yes. By—by—the Esquimaux.

MISS PRU. Was he with Mr. Peary?

MADGE. No,—Dr. Cook.

(*Throws wig off stage L. with a great deal of temper.*)

MISS PRU. Well, he ought to be scalped.

MISS PRU. (*seated at left of table, down R.; takes up photograph.*) A picture of Larry.

(*MISS PRU. is seated at table L.*)

MADGE. Oh, no! That is Larry's brother.

MISS PRU. Brother! He never had one.

MADGE. I mean my brother. Let me see! You have not seen Larry for several years. You will find him very much changed.

MISS PRU. I suppose the Esquimaux changed him.

MADGE. He has worked too hard at the office. The doctor prescribed the fresh air cure.

MISS PRIS. How many more of this family are taking the fresh air cure?

MADGE. He spends as much time as possible in his automobile.

NORA (*entering*). Miss Biddle be wantin' yees at the tiliphone, ma'am. Wants to know if her rose-spangled costume have come.

MADGE (*shaking her head*). No. No.

NORA. What, ma'am?

MADGE (*with emphasis*). I said no.

NORA. Very well, ma'am. (*Goes up stage and then returns.*) Oh, I forgot, ma'am. Mrs. Brown is at the door and wants to know if her red wig be here.

MADGE. Yes. Leave the room. (*NORA appears very much hurt; as she turns away.*) Nora.

NORA (*coming down*). Yis, ma'am.

MADGE. Tell Miss Becky to blow the automobile horn.

NORA. Very will, ma'am. If yees don't moind my sayin' it, ma'am (*indicating old ladies*), it's a bad thing to be decavin'.

(*Tosses her head and exits.*)

MISS PRU. If Larry is not well we must give him some of our remedies.

MADGE. Oh, do! He would just love any little attention.

REB. (*entering, blowing automobile horn*). What's the horn for, Madge?

MADGE. To be blown outside, you ninny.

(*Pantomime between them.*)

REB. Oh, I see. (*Runs off c.*)

MISS PRU. That person with bloomers again!

(*Horn outside.*)

MADGE (*greatly relieved*). That must be Larry. I will tell him that you are here. (*Runs off c.*)

MISS PRU. I hope Larry will be glad to see us.

MISS PRIS. (*sighing*). I hope so.

MISS PRU. You have the cigars, sister?

MISS PRIS. Yes, and they ought to be good. They were six for five. And the new pipe?

MISS PRU. (*severely*). Do I ever forget?

MISS PRIS. (*sighing*). Never.

JOE (*outside, assumes as heavy a voice as possible*). Aunt Prudence and Aunt Priscilla! (*Old ladies look expectant and very much excited.*) Where are they? (*Rushes on.*) My dear aunts! (*Embraces both, the three girls at door c. watching and laughing. JOE stands in c. with arm around each, looking at them admiringly.*) Well! well!—you haven't changed a bit. Just as handsome as ever.

(*Both very much pleased.*)

MISS PRU. (*looking at him intently*; MISS PRIS. *slyly looks at his hair*). Madge says that you are not well.

JOE. Not well! Nonsense! Same old boy, aunties. Same old boy.

(*Girls convulsed.*)

MISS PRIS. You certainly act well.

JOE. Never better in my life.

MISS PRU. We are sorry that Josephine is not here to receive us.

JOE. Oh, she has gone sailing.

OLD LADIES. Sailing!

JOE (*embarrassed*). Hasn't she?

MISS PRU. Madge said that she had gone automobiling.

JOE. Oh, yes, I remember, sailing and automobiling. (*Places chairs for them and brings down one for herself and sits between them.*) Let us all sit down and have a nice chat.

(*All seated.*)

MISS PRU. (*confidentially*). Has Josephine an admirer?

MISS PRIS. Some one really in love with her?

JOE. Well—really—oh, yes—so many you can't count them on your fingers. Tom Smith takes her automobiling—

MISS PRIS. (*very much pleased*). Yes, yes.

JOE. Billy Patterson for sailing, and Teddy Franklin in his air-ship—and—

MISS PRU. More air.

MISS PRIS. Which one is she really in love with?

JOE. Well—well, auntie, she hasn't told me.

MISS PRU. Larry, this is a secret between us three. If

Josephine decides to marry a man whom we like all our money goes to her.

JOE. You don't mean it! Well, I can tell you one thing. I shall do my best to have her pick out the right man.

(JOE forgets and speaks in natural voice.)

MISS PRU. Sister, don't you think that Larry's and Josephine's voices are very much alike?

JOE *(very much alarmed)*. Really! *(Assumes heavy voice.)* As she is my sister there is nothing very surprising about that.

MISS PRU. You are as handsome as ever, Larry.

JOE. Oh, thank you, Aunt Prue.

MISS PRIS. Your moustache is beautiful.

(Raises hand to touch it.)

JOE. Don't touch it! It might come off.

OLD LADIES. Come off!

JOE *(laughing)*. Oh, that's only my little joke.

(They all sit laughing together.)

NORA *(entering with two boxes of flowers)*. Miss Josephine. *(JOE looks at her.)* I mane Mr. Denbigh.

JOE *(rising and taking the boxes)*. Flowers, Nora?

NORA. For Miss Polly.

[Exit.

POLLY *(aside to JOE; runs down to her)*. For me?

JOE. No, for me. *(To old ladies.)* Some little bird must have whispered to me that you were coming to-day, aunties.

(Gives each a box; POLLY, very much disappointed, runs off c.)

MISS PRU. *(opening box)*. How kind of you, Larry. What beautiful roses.

MISS PRIS. *(same business)*. My favorite flower.

MISS PRU. If I remember rightly, you smoke.

JOE. Smoke! Oh, no—I mean yes—yes—of course.

MISS PRU. We have brought you some cigars.

JOE. How nice of you, Aunt Prue. I am just out of cigars.

MISS PRIS. And a new pipe.

JOE. Really, you are too good.

Enter NORA from R. with a pair of large gauze wings over her shoulder; crosses in front of the old ladies who are still seated; one of the wings hits MISS PRU. Exit, L.

MISS PRIS. What kind of a bird was that?

MISS PRU. (*rising, very indignant*). If you will excuse me I will get the cigars. [*Exit up R.*]

MISS PRIS. (*rising; confidentially to JOE*). I have something for you, too. A safety razor. [*Exit.*]

JOE (*sinking into chair*). I can see my finish.

(MADGE and POLLY run in.)

MADGE. Keep it up, Joe. You are doing beautifully.

POLLY. You are a perfect man.

JOE (*sarcastically*). Oh, am I? Do you know what is going to happen to me?

MADGE. What?

JOE. Aunties have brought me cigars and a pipe—and a safety razor.

POLLY (*laughing*). What a good joke.

JOE. Joke!

MADGE. You are not going to smoke?

JOE. Isn't that generally what happens to cigars and a pipe? Polly, you might just as well fill my part now. I shall be too ill to act to-night.

POLLY. Oh, pretend!

JOE. Pretend! Have you seen Aunt Prue's eagle eye? (*Rises.*) I'm through with this part.

(*Begins to pull off coat and exits L., followed by the girls who are remonstrating with her.*)

Enter LAWRENCE DENBIGH. *He should be dressed as much like JOE as possible—overcoat, hat and traveling bag.*

LAW. I rather think this will surprise the girls. Business through earlier than I expected, and here I am in time for the theatricals. I wonder where Madge is? (*Looks off L.*) Busy, I suppose. (*Has removed coat and comes down to chair C.; takes pipe and pouch from pocket.*) Oh, it is good to be at home again.

(*Sings a song while filling pipe. He is just about to light it when MISS PRU. and MISS PRIS. appear bringing pipe and a box of cigars.*)

MISS PRU. I hope he will like them.

LAW. Why, Aunt Prue and Aunt Pris. (*Greets them.*)
When did you arrive?

OLD LADIES. Who are you?

LAW. Larry, of course. Don't you know me?

(*Chucks AUNT PRU. under the chin.*)

MISS PRU. How dare you!

LAW. (*slapping MISS PRIS. on back*). Dear Aunt Priscilla.

MISS PRIS. Don't touch me.

LAW. (*taking pipe and cigars*). And you have brought me a pipe and cigars! You are the kind of aunts to have.

JOE (*entering from L. and seeing LAW.*). Larry!

OLD LADIES. Larry!

MISS PRU. (*to JOE*). If this is Larry, who are you?

LAW. Yes, who are you?

JOE (*crossing to LAW.*). Keep still! (*To old ladies.*)
This is my chauffeur.

LAW. Chauffeur!

MISS PRU. Chauffeur! He chucked me under the chin.

MISS PRIS. And patted me on the back.

JOE. Wilkins, I am astonished at such familiarity.

MISS PRU. He must be discharged.

(*LAW. very indignant. Tries to explain.*)

JOE. You are discharged, Wilkins.

MISS PRIS. Yes. Discharge him at once.

JOE. You are discharged again, Wilkins.

LAW. Discharged! Wilkins! How about these cigars?

JOE (*taking box of cigars*). Cremos! (*Gives them back.*)
They are yours.

MADGE (*running on C. and seeing LAW.*). Lawrence Den-
bigh!

JOE (*taking hold of her arm*). Keep still, Madge! Wilkins has just brought around the machine and aunties must have a ride.

MADGE. Just the thing.

(*Takes LAW. back a little and tries to explain.*)

MISS PRU. Ride in an automobile! Never!

MISS PRIS. Never!

MADGE. Oh, you will love it.

NORA (*entering from L. with arms full of costumes; lets them fall when she sees LAW.*). Mr. Larry! "Wigs on the Grane"!

MADGE. Nora, bring the ladies bonnets and shawls.

(NORA *picks up costumes and stumbles over them as she exits L.*)

LAW. Well, I'll be ——

(MADGE *stops him.*)

JOE. You need not wait, Wilkins. We will be out in a few moments.

LAW. All right, sir. (*To MADGE.*) What in the devil ——

MADGE (*aside*). Sh! Have a puncture. Keep them out all the afternoon. (*Pushes him off C. To old ladies.*) Now, you must have a long automobile ride.

MISS PRU. But we have been riding all the morning.

MADGE. So much the better. You will have grown accustomed to it.

(NORA *brings on bonnets, wraps and veils. JOE takes them from her and NORA exits, holding up her hands and shaking her head. Both old ladies are seated, MISS PRU. R., and MISS PRU. L.*)

MISS PRU. (*as JOE starts to put on her bonnet, snatching it from her*). I will put on my own bonnet, thank you.

MISS PRU. (*same business with MADGE*). So will I.

(*The old ladies take a great deal of time, and JOE and MADGE are very nervous over the delay.*)

MADGE. You will have some fine fresh air.

MISS PRU. More fresh air!

(*Business of JOE and MADGE tying the automobile veils.*)

MISS PRU. You are strangling me.

MISS PRU. I am choking.

(*Business of loosening veils. Automobile horn outside.*)

JOE. Wilkins is growing impatient. (*Both help the old ladies to rise.*) Hold on when Wilkins goes around corners.

MISS PRU. Does he go around corners? That settles it. I won't go. (*Tries to sit down.*)

MISS PRU. I never could stand corners. (*Horn again.*)

JOE. Off we go.

(*They hurry old ladies off c. REB. and POLLY run on from L., laughing.*)

REB. "Wigs on the Green," Madge.

MADGE. Don't you say that to me.

POLLY. Now the old ladies have gone, we can have a rehearsal of the old maids' song.

(*REB. and MADGE clear the stage. POLLY runs up to stage c. and calls off: "Ready, girls." Eight girls, dressed in old-fashioned silk gowns, kerchiefs, mitts, hair dressed in side curls, white stockings and black slippers, ribbons crossed at ankles, rush on and all begin talking to POLLY at once.*)

FIRST GIRL. I do not like my costume.

SECOND GIRL. Mine is not becoming.

POLLY. Girls, will you be quiet! Do take your places and try the song.

(*Girls, talking and laughing, come down stage and stand in line.*)

SONG

(*The music for this song will be found at the end of the book.*)

Altho' we're forty, we are quite saucy,
 And we laugh at the ills of life.
 Glance like this, so shy,
 Gowns like this, oh, my!
 We just love the good things of life.
 Side-step just like this, another one like that
 From fetters we are free, so we can happy be.
 A knowing glance like that,
 Another one like this,
 We really would not miss, a tiny little kiss.

(*Dance. At the end dance off L.*)

Enter JOE, from c., looking for something. NORA enters from L., with large shield; they come together.

JOE. I have lost my moustache, Nora.

NORA (*pointing to JOE'S pocket*). What's that?

JOE (*laughing, takes out moustache*). Oh, yes, I put it there.

NORA. Faith! It's the bist place for it, I'm thinkin'.

[*Exit L., with shield.*]

MADGE. I hope the old ladies will have a long ride. I wish they could be eighty miles from here.

REB. (*running on c.*). Madge, Larry had a blow out around the corner and the old ladies have come back.

MADGE. Have come back! What shall we do now?

MISS PRU. (*outside*). Quite long enough, thank you.

(MADGE *runs off c.*)

JOE. Heavens!

(*Rushes to mirror and puts on moustache.*)

REB. This is a comedy, all right. No need to give Polly's play.

(*Old ladies appear c., very cross, with bonnets and veils all awry, followed by MADGE.*)

MADGE. You did not have a very long ride.

MISS PRU. No, thank heaven! He said it was a puncture.

MADGE. When it is repaired you must try again.

MISS PRU. Again! Never!

MISS PRIS. Never!

(MADGE *whispers to JOE, who runs off c. with REB.*)

MADGE. I am sure he won't be very long. I will find out. (*Runs off c.*)

MISS PRU. Priscilla, there is something wrong about this house.

MISS PRIS. I quite agree with you.

Enter NORA, c. She is completely hidden by spangled gown which she is carrying. Crosses to L.

NORA. I am my father's ghost —

MISS PRU. Mercy! What is it? (*NORA uncovers her face and stands laughing at them.*) Will you kindly tell us what is going on in this house?

NORA. Shure and we be always loike this, ma'am.

MADGE (*outside*). Yes, I am sure they would like to go again.

MISS PRU. Priscilla, that is another ride for us.

MISS PRIS. (*weeping*). I do not want to go again.

MISS PRU. You shall not. Nora, we wish to hide somewhere.

(*The eight old-maid girls run on from c.*)

NORA (*to one of the girls*). Take these ould ladies along with the rest of yees.

GIRL. All right.

(*They take the old ladies and dance off with them L., the old ladies holding up their hands and remonstrating. NORA follows laughing.*)

Enter LAW., c., followed by JOE and MADGE.

LAW. Now, perhaps you will be good enough to tell me —

MADGE (*looking about*). Sh!

LAW. You have done nothing but "sh!" ever since I came into the house. I have had enough of it.

MADGE (*looking about*). Aunties must have gone to their room. (*JOE and MADGE each side of LAW., coaxingly.*) You see, Larry —

LAW. (*thrusting them aside*). No, I don't see anything.

JOE. Wait, and let me tell you. I am to take a man's part in the play to-night and am dressed for it.

LAW. Any fool can see that. What I want to know is —

MADGE. Joe received a letter from Aunt Prue saying that they were to arrive this afternoon.

JOE (*eagerly*). And of course it would never do to have them know that I was to appear on the stage this way —

LAW. You take off my coat, my waistcoat and my —

JOE. Oh, Larry!

MADGE. And as you were away we thought the best way out of it was to pretend that Joe was you.

LAW. Pretend to be me! (*Both nod assent.*) What! You made me out such a faint specimen of a man!

JOE (*pouting*). Not so bad, Larry.

LAW. Couldn't be worse.

MADGE. Then you came home and spoiled it all.

LAW. Oh, I did! Then I will go away again.

(*Starts for door c.; the girls run after him and pull him back, and push him into chair down L.*)

MADGE. You must help us out.

JOE. Only wish you had been further away from home when you had that blow out.

LAW. Perhaps you think that I keep punctures on tap to be served on the road at any desirable spot. That's about as reasonable as you women are.

(Tries to get up and the girls push him back.)

MADGE. Now, Larry, don't be disagreeable.

JOE. You ought to be glad that you are here to help us out of this scrape.

LAW. Oh, I am! Ha, ha,—tickled to death.

MADGE. You must take them to ride again.

LAW. Not on your life.

(Starts to rise; business repeated.)

JOE. Keep them going until after the rehearsal.

MADGE. And then take them home.

LAW. *(rising)*. Oh, I can, can I? *(Decidedly.)* Well, I don't see myself doing it. *[Exit R., followed by the girls.]*

REB. *(outside)*. Make way for the suffragettes.

(Eight girls dressed like REB., and carrying yellow pennants with various mottoes march on; after a varied march form a line down stage, separate and REB. enters and takes C.)

SONG OF THE SUFFRAGETTES

(The music for this song will be found at the end of the book.)

We are the suffragettes
 Know us by our badge of yellow.
 We do not stew and fret,
 Each one a jolly fellow.
 No more to sew, to brew, to bake.
 In other ways we'll take the cake.
 We'll be the presidents of our land
 And show the men we have some sand.

(Topical verse recited by REB.: "We are the Suffragettes," etc. All march off.)

Enter JOE, followed by MADGE.

JOE. We are in luck to have had that rehearsal. I wonder where our dear aunties are.

MISS PRU. (*outside*). I won't stay in this room another moment.

MADGE (*indicating room off L.*). Aunties in there! (MISS PRU. *enters, followed by MISS PRIS.*) How did you get into that room, Aunt Prue?

MISS PRU. We walked in. Is this a home for old ladies?

MISS PRIS. That room is full of them.

MADGE. Let me explain. We are rehearsing for private theatricals. Josephine is to be a man——

MISS PRU. What!

JOE. In the play.

MISS PRU. Josephine Denbigh, take off those clothes at once!

MISS PRIS. Yes, at once.

MISS PRU. We shall never get over such disgrace.

MISS PRIS. (*bursting into tears*). Never!

MISS PRU. (*with severity*). Control yourself, Priscilla.

MISS PRIS. I will try to, sister.

MISS PRU. What is the meaning of this unseemly conduct?

Enter LAW. and REB., from R.

JOE. You see, auntie ——

(*Takes MISS PRU.'s arm coaxingly, but she draws away.*

MADGE and JOE look appealingly at LAW.)

LAW. (*coming down*). I will tell you all about it.

(*Steps between the old ladies.*)

MISS PRU. You! The chauffeur!

MISS PRIS. The chauffeur!

LAW. Oh, that was only a joke. I am the real Larry.

MISS PRU. (*indicating JOE*). Well, you ought to be glad that you are not that specimen.

LAW. Our girls give a play each year for some worthy charity, and Joe made such a good-looking man (MADGE and JOE *either side of old ladies*), she had to be in it, and we thought you would not object, as it was for charity.

MISS PRU. A worthy charity?

LAW. Oh, yes.

MISS PRU. Well, if it is for charity—what do you say, Priscilla?

MISS PRIS. Just as you say, sister.

LAW. Oh, come, Aunt Prue, say yes.

MADGE. } Please, Aunt Prue.
JOE. }

MISS PRU. (*hesitating, MISS PRIS. watching her; finally smiling very sweetly*). Yes, for charity.

(*Old maids and suffragettes run in; all sing. See music at end.*)

We work for charity, charity,
We work for charity.
Hope you'll like what you've come to see
When we give you this short comedy.
We work for charity, charity,
We work for charity,
Sing of joy, sing of bliss,
We love work like this—
Charity, charity.

CURTAIN

INCIDENTAL MUSIC
FOR
"COATS AND PETTICOATS"
OLD MAIDS SONG

The first system of piano accompaniment consists of two staves. The upper staff is in treble clef and the lower staff is in bass clef. The key signature has one flat (B-flat) and the time signature is 2/4. The music features a steady accompaniment with chords and moving lines in both hands.

The second system of piano accompaniment consists of two staves. The upper staff is in treble clef and the lower staff is in bass clef. The key signature has one flat (B-flat) and the time signature is 2/4. The music continues with a steady accompaniment, including some rests in the bass line.

The first line of the vocal melody is written on a single treble clef staff. It begins with a quarter rest, followed by a series of notes corresponding to the lyrics.

2. Al-tho' we're for - ty we are quite sau - cy, And we
3. It may be naught-y be-cause we're for - ty, To still

The third system of piano accompaniment consists of two staves. The upper staff is in treble clef and the lower staff is in bass clef. The key signature has one flat (B-flat) and the time signature is 2/4. The music concludes with a final chord in both hands.

laugh at the ills of life; Glance like this so
like the good things of life; We hope soon to

shy, Gowns like this, O my! We just
fly In sweet by and by, We just

DANCE

love the good things of life. A side step just like
love the good things of life. A side step just like

this, An-oth-er one like that, From fet-ters we are
 this, An-oth-er one like that, Now could a young thing

free, So we can hap-py be; A
 show Much live-li-er a toe; A

know-ing glance like that, An-oth-er one like this, We
 win-ning smile like that, An-oth-er one like this, And

Repeat DANCE without VOICE—
then to INTRODUCTION.

real - ly would not miss a tin - y lit - tle kiss.
we will show you yet how we can pi - rou - ette.

The musical score consists of three staves. The top staff is a single treble clef line with a key signature of one flat (Bb) and a common time signature (C). The middle and bottom staves are grouped by a brace on the left and represent a piano accompaniment in 2/4 time. The piano part features a rhythmic bass line in the left hand and a more melodic line in the right hand, often using chords and triplets.

SUFFRAGETTES' MARCH.

The musical score for 'Suffragettes' March' is presented in two systems. Each system consists of two staves, a treble clef and a bass clef, both with a key signature of one flat (Bb) and a time signature of 2/4. The music is characterized by a strong, rhythmic bass line in the left hand and a more active, melodic line in the right hand, often featuring chords and triplets. The piece concludes with a double bar line and repeat dots.

The first system of musical notation consists of two staves, treble and bass, joined by a brace on the left. The key signature has one flat (B-flat) and the time signature is 3/4. The treble staff begins with a treble clef and a B-flat key signature. It contains several measures of music, including a complex chordal passage with a fermata. The bass staff begins with a bass clef and a B-flat key signature. It contains several measures of music, including a complex chordal passage with a fermata.

The second system of musical notation consists of two staves, treble and bass, joined by a brace on the left. The key signature has one flat (B-flat) and the time signature is 3/4. The treble staff begins with a treble clef and a B-flat key signature. It contains several measures of music, including a complex chordal passage with a fermata. The bass staff begins with a bass clef and a B-flat key signature. It contains several measures of music, including a complex chordal passage with a fermata.

The third system of musical notation consists of two staves, treble and bass, joined by a brace on the left. The key signature has one flat (B-flat) and the time signature is 3/4. The treble staff begins with a treble clef and a B-flat key signature. It contains several measures of music, including a complex chordal passage with a fermata. The bass staff begins with a bass clef and a B-flat key signature. It contains several measures of music, including a complex chordal passage with a fermata.

We are the suf - fra - gettes, Know us by our badge of

yel - low, We do not stew and fret, we're each

one a jol - ly fel - low. No more to brew, to

sew, to bake, In oth - er ways we'll take the cake; We'll

be the Pres - i - dents of our land . And

show the men we have some sand.

After Recitation, which should be a topical verse, repeat Song, immediately followed by March.

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